

## Message Text

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11

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01

AGR-05 AID-05 /042 W

----- 123685

R 221029Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2464

RRNFO RUTAIJ/AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN 5196

AMEMBASSY BAMAY

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NIAMEY 4891

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ECON, PINT, NG

SUBJECT: KOUNTCHE BEARS GRIM ECONOMIC TIDINGS

1. POOR 1975 HARVEST AND RELATED ECONOMIC PROBLEMS DOMINATED BRIEFANDSOBER MESSAGE TO NATION BY KOUNTCHE ON REPUBLIC DAY, DECUMBER 17. SPEECH SET RESTRAINED, STOICAL TONE FOR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS. REPEATING THEMES ON WHICH HE HAS BEEN HAMMERING FOR PAST SIX MONTI, PRESIDENT TOLD COUNTRY HE AND IT MUST SOLDIER ON.

2. IN MEASURED CADENCES AND WITH SINCERITY PLUS QUIET CONFIDENCE THAT HIS BEST EFFORTS PROJECT PRESIDENT (1) TOLD COUNTRY THERE WILL BE A 200,000 TON CONSUMPTION SHORTFALL NEXT YEAR NOT COUNTING IMPORTS IN PIPELINE, OR REQUIREMENTS FOR RESERVE STOCKS AND SEEDS (2) PLACED BLAME WHERE IT BELONGS ON WEATHER, CROP DISEASES AND PESTS (3) DREW ATTENTION ALSO TO DISASTEROUS PEANUT HARVEST OF SOME 30,000. TONS, A TENTH OF WHAT IT IS IN A GOOD YEAR. (4) NOTED BUDGETARY  
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IMPACT OF ALL THE FOREGOING -- FINANCING MORE IMPORTS OF

FOOD, INCREASED OUTLAYS FOR FERTILIZER AND PLANT PROTECTION, BAILING OUT NEARLY BANKRUPT SONARA -- ALL OF WHICH WILL COME NEXT YEAR WHEN ALREADY PROJECTED NEW EXPENDITURES FOR DEVELOPMENT ALSO HAVE TO BE ABSORBED. PRESIDENT OFFERED NO PALLIATIVES OTHER THAN HARD WORK AND SACRIFICE, COMBINED WITH HOPE THAT ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES MIGHT CHANGE AND THAT LONGER TERM EFFORTS WILL BEGIN TO TAKE HOLD AS NIGER THREE YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN, PROMISED SOI, BEGINS TO TAKE HOLD. MEANTIME, PRESIDENT SUGGESTED, NIGER RELIANCE ON FOREIGN ASSISTANCE WILL GROW.

3. KOUNTCHE WAS MORE SPECIFIC THAN USUAL IN THANKING FOREIGN DONORS -- MENTIONING EC, UN, US, FRG, SAUDIA ARABIA, CAMJDA, AND CHINA BUT INTERESTINGLY (PERHAPS BECAUSE OF HIS CONCERN WITH ANGOLA) OMITTING USSR. HE ALSO WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO NOTE SPECIAL EFFORTS OF US AND CANADA IN PLANT PROTECTION, SAYING LARGER AND BETTER PROGRAM WOULD BE ORGANIZED BY GON NEXT YEAR.

4. AS IF TO REMIND COUNTRY THAT THINGS WOULD BE WORSE, KOUNTCHE CONCLUDED BY EVOLVING TRAGEDY UNFOLDING IN ANGOLA. "ALL AFRICA WEEPS IN SHAME AND IMPOTENCE....WITHIN EDIFICE OF AN AOU THAT IS DEEPLY SPLIT, WITHOUT A GUIDING DOCTRINE AND LACKING SENSE OF MUTUAL TOLERANCE AND REAL BROTHERHOOD THAT CEMENTS GREAT ALLIANCES TOGETHER."

5. CHIEF POLITICAL NOTE IN SPEECH WAS ASSURANCE THAT THE NEW NATIONAL MOVEMENT MENTIONED SEVERAL TIMES IN RECENT MONTHS, WILL BE IN PLACE BEFORE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF COUP NEXT APRIL. KOUNTCHE ALSO SAID CIVIL SERVANTS IN INTERIOR WILL SOON BEGIN TO DRAW HARDSHIP PAY.

6. COMMENT  
AS BAD AS ECONOMIC PICTURE MAY BE, MOST OF PRESIDENT'S AUDIENCE WERE ALREADY AWARE OF BASIC DIMENSIONS OF NIGER ECONOMIC PROBLEMS INCLUDING HARVEST, AND SO ARE PROBABLY NOT TOO UNSETTLED BY FORMAL CONFIRMATION THAT THINGS ARE NOT GOING WELL. IN ANY CASE, PRESIDENT CONTINUED TO TELL IT LIKE IT IS, PROJECTING BUSINESS-LIKE, NO NONSENSE IMAGE AND SIGNALLING THAT HE DOING WHAT HE CAN TO MAKE THIS INCREDIBLY CONFIDENTIAL

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POOR COUNTRY AT LEAST BREAK EVEN. IT IS HARD NOT TO SYMPATHIZE WITH HIM. OVER TIME, OF COURSE, AS KOUNTCHE AND ALL OBSERVERS ARE AWARE, GOVERNMENT CANNOT SUSTAIN ITSELF WITHOUT SOME GOOD OMENS AND RAY OF LIGHT ON HORIZON. HECK

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## Message Attributes

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